Annual Report

A recap of our work for our members in 2011
To our members

“Over the past year, your support helped us win a number of landmark victories. With you by our side, we will continue to fight for clean energy, a healthier planet and a brighter future.”

Over the past year, your support helped us win a number of landmark victories, both here in Massachusetts and nationwide.

Here in the commonwealth, we launched a campaign to get 10 percent of Massachusetts’ energy from the sun by 2030, building on the strength of the commonwealth’s highly successful solar programs. Our canvassers fanned out across the state, mobilizing massive support for expanded access to affordable solar power. We’re also building a coalition of local businesses, leaders and communities united in the desire for a solar-powered future.

After years of hard work and perseverance by our staff, members and allies, this year finally saw Cape Wind clear the last hurdles that stood in its way. Soon, it will begin construction, making it one of the first offshore wind farms in the country.

Together with our national federation, we also helped build support for a number of historic victories for clean air and clean water. Thanks in part to our efforts, President Obama announced the first-ever nationwide limits on toxic mercury pollution from power plants last winter.

More recently, the EPA proposed standards on carbon pollution from power plants—the first nationwide limits on the single largest source of the pollution that fuels global warming.

And this year, President Obama moved closer to finalizing guidelines that will restore Clean Water Act protections to many of our waterways. This important step for Massachusetts’ rivers, lakes and beaches comes at the end of a long campaign in which Environment Massachusetts, along with our allies across the country, talked to more than half a million people to raise support for clean water.

We have you to thank for these victories; your support makes all of our efforts possible. With you by our side, we will continue to fight for clean energy, a healthier planet, and a brighter future.

Sincerely,

Ben Wright
Advocate, Environment Massachusetts
From the Connecticut to the beaches of Cape Cod, Massachusetts is defined by its waterways. Our cities were built around them. Our families grew up by them. Many of us depend on them for drinking water, for recreation, or for the touch of nature they bring to our lives each day. And now, President Obama is about to sign off on the biggest victory for Massachusetts’ rivers, lakes and beaches in a decade.

Administration poised to restore protections
Thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade, over half of our streams and hundreds of acres of wetlands—the same waterways that feed and filter our rivers, lakes and bays—may not have been protected by the Clean Water Act. Industrial polluters have been allowed to dump waste into many of our streams, developers could pave over our wetlands, and the EPA hasn’t been able to do a thing about it. But in February, the Obama administration announced that it was in the final stage before approving new guidelines that will restore Clean Water Act protections to many of our waterways.

- Environment Massachusetts played a critical role in getting the administration to act. Along with our national federation, we talked to more than half a million people, gathered 88,000 public comments, and mobilized more than 500 elected officials, farmers and recreational businesses in support of the proposed guidelines.

- Once they are final, this will be the biggest victory for the Bay State’s waterways in a decade. But our work is not done. Many in Congress are working to stop the president from finalizing these guidelines. As of May, there were four separate rollback attempts in the House and Senate. Environment Massachusetts is committed to defending these new protections so that all Bay Staters can enjoy clean water.
Go Solar Massachusetts

Massachusetts is at the forefront of solar policy in the country, but we can do even better. The Bay State has tremendous solar potential, and solar power technology has never been more viable—since 2008, the number of solar installations in the commonwealth has increased 24-fold. With solar technology advancing exponentially, we believe Massachusetts can get 10 percent of our energy from the sun by 2030. Over the past year, we’ve been conducting a grassroots campaign to expand access to affordable solar power.
A plan to get 10 percent of our energy from the sun by 2030

Massachusetts has more solar potential than Germany, the world’s second most advanced country when it comes to solar installations. In 2011, we began a campaign to make Massachusetts a national leader in solar energy—getting us to 10 percent solar by 2030. We have a bold yet realistic plan to accomplish this, and with your support, Massachusetts can fulfill the promise of a solar-powered future.

Taking our campaign to 1 in 10 Bay Staters
Over the past year, we’ve been mobilizing overwhelming public support for expanded access to solar power among citizens, businesses, communities and elected officials.

- We organized over 60 solar businesses to write letters to the Legislature in support of our solar campaign to allow homeowners and businesses to sell excess power they generate back to their local utility company.

- We partnered with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and clean energy businesses to show our members how to go solar.

- This summer, we’re talking to 1 in 10 Bay State households to mobilize support for solar power.

- Dozens of local businesses in key legislative districts signed a petition supporting our plan to go solar.

With global warming on the rise, it’s time to go solar
Despite Massachusetts’ immense solar potential, we still get 90 percent of our energy from dirty, dangerous sources that cause global warming and endanger public health and the environment. But we are working to change that by expanding access to affordable solar power.

- Pollution from fossil fuel-burning power plants is one of the top causes of global warming, which poses a very real threat to our health and our environment. Global warming can be felt in everything from increased smog pollution to more extreme precipitation to more severe droughts and heat waves, and unless we transition away from coal and oil-burning fuel sources, it will only get worse.

- That’s why it’s so critical that Massachusetts expand its use of solar power. In doing so, we can greatly reduce the pollution that causes global warming and lead the Northeast—and indeed, the nation—toward a cleaner, healthier future.
Clean Air, Healthy Families

We should be able to breathe clean air without worrying about mercury in our bloodstream or soot in our lungs. And we should be able to power our homes without contributing to global warming. Yet coal-fired power plants and other industrial polluters spew hundreds of thousands of tons of dangerous pollutants and global warming-causing carbon into our atmosphere every year. We need to protect our families’ health by requiring polluters to clean up their act—and in the past year, we’ve taken two giant steps toward that goal.
Obama administration announced a pair of historic victories for clean air

Air pollution has made its way into every part of our lives. Power plants emit mercury pollution and other toxics that can seriously endanger our health. They also pump massive amounts of carbon pollution into our air—the same pollution that causes global warming. In the last year, Environment Massachusetts focused its clean air campaign on cutting these two dangerous sources of pollution from power plants—and won a pair of unprecedented results.

First-ever nationwide mercury standards

Every year, coal-fired power plants spew into our air hundreds of thousands of pounds of toxic mercury, which fall to earth in the form of rain and contaminate rivers, lakes and streams. In fact, one out of every 10 women of childbearing age has enough mercury in her body to put her baby at risk of neurological damage. Last year, reducing mercury and other air pollution was one of Environment Massachusetts’ top priorities.

• In 2011, we partnered with our national coalition of allies to help motivate more than 700,000 people across America to send the EPA public comments in support of strong action on mercury—no other single EPA rule has ever received so much support.

• On December 21, 2011, the Obama administration responded to this show of support by announcing the first-ever nationwide standards for mercury pollution from power plants. This followed the July 2011 announcement of new standards for smog and soot pollution from power plants in the eastern and central regions of the United States. Combined, these new standards will save 46,000 lives.

EPA moved to cut carbon pollution from power plants

In addition to President Obama’s mercury pollution standards, the past year saw another historic victory for clean air: On March 27, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency proposed limits on carbon pollution from new power plants. If passed, they will be the first nationwide limits on the largest single source of the carbon pollution that fuels global warming.

• The EPA is expected to finalize these carbon pollution standards for new power plants by the end of 2012, and begin developing standards for existing coal-fired power plants in the near future as well.

• However, through paid ads and armies of lobbyists within Congress, the coal industry and other corporate polluters are trying to prevent the implementation of these commonsense standards. Together with our national federation, Environment Massachusetts is gathering tens of thousands of public comments in support of the standards. And with your help, we know we can win.
Protect the Quabbin

For decades, the Quabbin Reservoir has provided pure, healthy drinking water to more than 2 million Bay Staters. The forestland surrounding the Quabbin—set aside years ago thanks to the foresight of the state—filters out pollutants and helps maintain some of the purest drinking water in the country. In fact, the forest acts as such an effective natural filter that water from the Quabbin doesn’t need an expensive, high-tech filtration system to make it safe to drink. But when logging threatened the Quabbin, we took action.
Building public support for a permanent ban on logging around the Quabbin

In the past few years, the Department of Conservation (DCR) has allowed logging around the Quabbin Reservoir. Until we stepped in, diesel-spewing logging trucks were invited to clearcut as close as five yards from the Quabbin’s waters, leaving nothing but churned-up mud and dead branches in their wake. But in 2010, our advocacy and your support helped spur the Patrick administration to declare that logging around the Quabbin, and all of Massachusetts’ watershed lands, would be suspended pending review. Now, we’re pushing for a permanent ban on logging in the area.

Thousands of Bay Staters voiced support

Protecting the forestland around the Quabbin has been recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency as a key strategy for ensuring that millions of Bay Staters enjoy clean drinking water, specifically because the surrounding forest “maintains the integrity of the watershed.” That’s why we’ve been working so hard to permanently protect the Quabbin from logging.

• We talked to 100,000 people and submitted more than 14,000 public comments urging the state to protect the drinking water of one in three Bay Staters by banning logging around the Quabbin Reservoir.

• This public outcry convinced Gov. Patrick to declare a temporary moratorium on logging in the area and hold six public listening sessions to evaluate whether the moratorium should be permanent.

• We kept up the pressure, leading then-DCR Commissioner Richard Sullivan to declare that “we admit our mistakes… we need the public’s input into our values moving forward.” State officials pledged to review rules on logging in Massachusetts’ watershed lands.

Gov. Patrick yet to declare permanent ban

Despite the outpouring of support by our members and others for a permanent ban on logging around the Quabbin, Gov. Patrick has yet to decide—and the initial moratorium is coming to an end. Unless we take action, the DCR could once again allow logging and endanger the Quabbin.

• You can’t build a campfire near the Quabbin. You can’t walk your dog. You can’t even toss a baseball. And for good reason—the forestland that filters our drinking water is extremely ecologically sensitive and must be carefully regulated. Given the importance of preserving the area, it’s outrageous that the state would consider once again allowing logging.

• Environment Massachusetts is intensifying our grassroots campaign to convince Gov. Patrick to permanently ban logging around the Quabbin. We’re focusing a media spotlight on the problem, mobilizing the public, and holding our environmental officials accountable. We’re also engaging municipal officials and building a coalition of local governments that oppose the logging. And with your help, we know we can win.

When clearcutting threatened the forestland that filters and purifies our drinking water, we helped convince Gov. Patrick to declare a temporary moratorium on logging around the Quabbin pending further review. Now we’re working for a permanent ban.

Above: Environment Massachusetts Advocate Ben Wright led our 2011 campaign to ban logging around the Quabbin Reservoir.
Global Warming Solutions

Gov. Deval Patrick and officials from other Northeast states are gearing up to make changes to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the Northeast region’s landmark pollution program. RGGI caps global warming emissions from power plants, sells permits to emit carbon and invests the revenues in energy efficiency and clean energy initiatives. Over the past year, Environment Massachusetts has been hard at work convincing state officials to strengthen the program so that Massachusetts cuts more pollution and generates more clean energy.

250 leaders join call for stronger program

So far, RGGI has been a tremendous success. Massachusetts is investing 100 percent of the proceeds from the Initiative—more than $142 million so far—in programs to improve energy efficiency and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy technologies. But RGGI is under attack by polluting interests in Maine, New Hampshire and New Jersey. RGGI is only as effective as the participating states allow it to be. That’s why we’ve been working to convince our leaders that RGGI is essential to addressing global warming.

- Spirited grassroots campaigns by staff and members of Environment Massachusetts and our allies helped lead to the initial adoption of RGGI. But simply preserving the program is not enough; if we want to get off our dirtiest, most destructive energy sources, we must strengthen RGGI.

- In December, we worked with our allies to sign on 250 environmental groups, clean energy businesses and public health officials in support of a set of principles to strengthen RGGI. We presented these principles to the top energy and environmental officials in the other participating RGGI states.

- In January, Massachusetts officials responded to this show of support and joined officials from Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut and Vermont in announcing their intentions to begin the process of strengthening the RGGI emissions cap.

Above: wind and solar projects in the commonwealth. Revenues from RGGI go toward energy efficiency and clean energy initiatives.
Cape Wind

The wind that whips up white caps off our shores and carries our sailboats across the waves is a vast untapped resource, capable of powering our homes and businesses with clean, renewable electricity. But we have never come close to harnessing the immense energy potential of offshore wind—until now. During the past year, Massachusetts overcame the final obstacles to making Cape Wind a reality.

On the path to wind power, all that’s left to do is build

Wind power will be essential to getting our state and our country off fossil fuels without creating more pollution. In recent years, Environment Massachusetts has been instrumental in raising public awareness and support for Cape Wind, the proposed 468-megawatt offshore wind farm off Nantucket Sound. We’ve worked with lawmakers, mobilized the public and led rallies to show that Bay Staters support offshore wind. Now, after years of hard work, Cape Wind has entered the final phase of its development and is poised to begin construction.

- Cape Wind has entered into agreements to sell 77.5 percent of the power it generates, paving the way for construction to finally begin on one of the nation’s first offshore wind projects.

- Once finished, Cape Wind will provide 75 percent of Cape Cod’s electricity.

- Looking ahead, Environment Massachusetts and the National Wildlife Federation released a report showing that along the Atlantic coast alone, reaching the Department of Energy’s conservative goal of 54 gigawatts of offshore wind power would reduce global warming pollution by the equivalent of taking nearly 18 million cars off the road.

Top: Offshore wind in Denmark.
Bottom: Gov. Deval Patrick inspects part of a wind turbine. After sustained efforts by our staff, members and allies, Cape Wind has finally been cleared to begin construction.
Let’s Get Mass. Off Oil

From accidents and spills, to smog, to climate change, the environmental costs of our oil dependence are out of control. It’s time to set Massachusetts—and the nation—on a path to getting off oil for good. We can get there by convincing our leaders to make new investments in fuel-efficient cars, new technology and a first-class system of public transportation.

54.5 miles per gallon by 2025

Prices at the pump may seem astronomical, but they’re only a fraction of the true cost of our oil addiction. We pay for oil dependence with the health of our lungs and our environment. And because oil consumption is America’s number one cause of the pollution that fuels global warming, we pay for our dependence with the future that we’re leaving our children. But it doesn’t have to be this way. In the past year, Environment Massachusetts has made encouraging inroads in our effort to break our addiction to oil.

Last summer, in the wake of a disaster in which an ExxonMobil pipeline spilled 42,000 gallons of oil into the Yellowstone River, our staff and allies got straight to work, mobilizing 10,000 people to voice their support for cleaner cars that use less oil. The Obama administration responded by announcing two big steps toward getting America off oil:

- The administration announced new clean car standards equivalent to 54.5 miles per gallon that will make super-efficient cars the norm by 2025. This is the single biggest step ever taken to reduce oil consumption and global warming pollution.

- The Obama administration also announced the first-ever standard for trucks, which will save more than 20 billion gallons of gasoline by 2018.
Citizen support is the cornerstone of Environment Massachusetts. Thousands of Massachusetts citizens supported Environment Massachusetts and the Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center by making membership contributions in 2012. The members listed below were particularly generous in backing the organizations’ research and advocacy. Names that appear in italics denote Monthly Supporters. These members provide stability to the organizations’ resources through our monthly giving program.

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